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**Amendments to the Claims**

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (currently amended) A method of conducting a fire command sequence in a system of electronic pyrotechnic devices, comprising the following steps:
  - a) establishing a system including a master device and a plurality of electronic pyrotechnic devices;
  - b) issuing a fire command from said master device to said electronic pyrotechnic devices; ~~and,~~
  - c) conducting a pre-fire countdown prior to any final fire countdown;
  - d) issuing one or more additional fire commands after step b) and during step c); and,
  - e) during step b), providing said pyrotechnic devices with a pre-fire countdown delay time;  
wherein said pre-fire countdown delay time is decreased by a predetermined amount each time a fire command is issued.
2. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein said system is an electronic blasting system.
- 3-5. (canceled)

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5. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of performing one or more firing-readiness checks after step b).
6. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of performing a final fire countdown after step c).
7. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of firing said pyrotechnic devices after step c).
8. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of performing a final fire countdown after step c) and then firing said pyrotechnic devices.
9. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of said master device, during step c), checking for error responses from said pyrotechnic devices after step b).
- 10-12. (canceled)
13. (currently amended) The method of claim [[12]] 1, wherein said fire command includes a register correlated to said pre-fire countdown delay time.
14. (original) The method of claim 13, wherein said system is an electronic blasting system.
15. (currently amended) An electronic pyrotechnic device including circuitry configured and/or programmed to conduct a pre-fire

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countdown prior to detonation and prior to any final fire countdown, wherein said device includes means for performing the following functions:

- a) receiving a fire command and a corresponding pre-fire countdown delay time;
- b) prior to any final fire countdown, conducting a pre-fire countdown in response to receipt of said fire command and corresponding pre-fire countdown delay time;
- c) after receiving said fire command and during said pre-fire countdown, receiving one or more additional fire commands and corresponding pre-fire countdown delay times each of which is successively decreased by a predetermined amount.

- 16. (original) The device of claim 15, further including circuitry configured and/or programmed to perform one or more firing-readiness checks during said pre-fire countdown.
- 17. (original) The device of claim 16, further including circuitry configured and/or programmed to perform a final fire countdown following said pre-fire countdown.
- 18. (original) The device of claim 16, further including circuitry configured and/or programmed to convey error responses to a master device.

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19. (original) The device of claim 16, further including a delay register from which countdown delay time is at least partly derived.
20. (currently amended) A system including a plurality of electronic pyrotechnic devices comprising:
- a) a master device;
  - b) a bus connected to said master device; and,
  - c) a plurality of electronic pyrotechnic devices connected to said bus, said electronic pyrotechnic devices each including circuitry configured and/or programmed to conduct a pre-fire countdown prior to detonation and prior to any final fire countdown;
- wherein said master device is configured and/or programmed to issue a fire command to trigger said pre-fire countdown in said electronic pyrotechnic devices, and said master device is further configured and/or programmed to issue multiple fire commands during the pre-fire countdown, said fire commands each including a pre-fire countdown delay time that decreases by a predetermined amount with the issuance of each command.
21. (currently amended) The system of claim 20, wherein said ~~master device is configured and/or programmed to issue a fire command to trigger said pre-fire countdown in said electronic pyrotechnic devices~~ electronic pyrotechnic devices each

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include a pyrotechnic charge and a means for initiating said pyrotechnic charge.

22. (currently amended) The system of claim [[21]] 20, wherein said system is further configured and/or programmed to perform one or more firing-readiness checks during said pre-fire countdown.
23. (original) The system of claim 22, wherein said system is further configured and/or programmed to perform a final fire countdown following said pre-fire countdown.
24. (original) The system of claim 23, wherein said system is an electronic blasting system and said electronic pyrotechnic devices are electronic detonators.
25. (original) The system of claim 24, wherein said electronic detonators further include circuitry configured and/or programmed to convey error responses to a blasting machine.
26. (currently amended) The system of claim [[21]] 20, wherein ~~said master device is further configured and/or programmed to issue multiple fire commands during the pre fire countdown,~~  
~~said fire commands each including~~ include a register correlated to a pre-fire countdown delay time ~~that decreases with the issuance of each command.~~

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27. (new) The device of claim 15, further including a pyrotechnic charge and a means for initiating said pyrotechnic charge.
28. (new) The device of claim 27, wherein said electronic pyrotechnic device is a detonator for use in mining or blasting.
29. (new) The device of claim 27, wherein said means for initiating comprises a bridgewire.
30. (new) The device of claim 15, wherein said circuitry includes an ASIC and a firing capacitor.
31. (new) The device of claim 15, further comprising means for detecting a CRC error associated with a fire command, and disregarding that fire command.